

Newport Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
May 17, 2018

Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Michael Spencer. He announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meeting Act.

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor John Joswick, Town Manager Wendy King, Commissioner Tim Chatburn, Commissioner Florence Czerwinski, Commissioner Carol Ann Gretz, Police Chief Michael Capriglione and Solicitor Chris Griffiths.

Minutes from the meeting of April 19, 2018, were approved via motion by Vice Mayor Joswick and seconded by Mayor Spencer. All ayes.

Public Comment - Jeffrey Panacost, resident, commented on the lack of seating at Ella Johnson Park and wanted to know if we could consider purchasing a few benches. Robert Harvey, Maintenance Supervisor, will obtain pricing. Chief Capriglione noted that seating was not considered when the park was first established because the town did not want loitering. Barbara McNally, property manager at 102 E. Ayre Street apartments, advised that people are continually running through the stop sign at E. Ayre and Marshall Street. Chief Capriglione said that he would have coverage in the area. Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna and Associates, welcomed Commissioner Gretz to the board.

Correspondence - Mayor Spencer received an email from Jason Hastings regarding the James Street Bridge project and lowering the clearance of the Amtrak bridge to deepen the clearance. They are checking the sewer line to see if it needs to be moved.

Town Manager King reviewed her report - 2017 audit has been completed and should be ready for presentation at July's meeting, Alderman candidate interviews occurred and our selection was getting a background investigation completed to proceed with appointment process. Patchwork is being completed along Maryland Avenue (route 4) through Newport. Complaints about a couple of properties in town that will be addressed by the solicitor and town manager. Tax invoices were sent out and payments have started to come in. Open Enrollment for healthcare plan occurring in May. No specific budget notes.

Vice Mayor Joswick had a question regarding property maintenance and a suggestion that we allow a "three strike" system. Town Manager King advised that it was in place already and that the majority of residents fixed any problems with the first notice. Solicitor Griffiths suggested following what New Castle County does and perform the yard maintenance and bill the property owner. The town's liability insurance carrier has taken the position that they could not allow us to do that and still expect them to cover us in the event of litigation.

Police Chief Capriglione reviewed his monthly departmental statistics for April 2018. He noted it was a bad month for serious car crashes - 13 people were injured during the month.

Alderman's Report - \$45,361 in fines collected in April.

Maintenance - Abandoned houses were reported to town manager who will be working with the solicitor. Noted sewer line testing at the bridge. Workman's comp safety meeting - accidents were down 40%, sign placed on Mary Street (kids playing"), met with Delmarva regarding light at the end of West Ayre that shining in a resident's window and new lighting placement, sign placed at Old Mill Lane, there were trees along Mary Street in Stonehurst that were to be removed, but we are waiting for property owner to straighten out his yard, but in the meantime, we will use the funds to remove five dead trees at the other side of W. Ayre Street.

Mayor Spencer asked Bob how far down they were looking at the sewer. He thought about three feet at least.

Code Enforcement - Enforcement spoke to property owner to had requested the trees removed and he told the property owner that the trees could not be removed until his yard was free of debris. Talked about one the homes that has attempted to cut their grass but did not finish it. Not positive a person actually lives there. Writeup is still hanging on the door. Many homes for sale in town. Rents are increasing. Positive news for the town.

Legal - Alderman interviews, three different property issues, resolution for nomination of Alderman appointment.

Commissioners - Commissioner Gretz mentioned trash along ramp coming into Newport. Deldot maintains the area and maintenance does try to take care of things while cutting grass in the area.

Mayor - Met with BASF to help them with utility costs. Spoke to Max Walton regarding Board of Adjustment structure. Any changes to remove solicitor would have to be done by charter change.

Budget is looking nice.

New Business - Resolution 2018-002 to nominate Michael Szczerba for Assistant Alderman. Former Police Chief Szczerba introduced himself to council and audience and outlined what he had been doing career-wise. Mayor Spencer made a motion to accept; Commissioner Chatburn seconded. Roll call vote - all ayes.

Motion to adjourn - Vice Mayor Joswick. Mayor Spencer seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.